

12th Annual Hoarding Forum: Practical Intervention in an Integrated System

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On June 8, 2016, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) Older Adult System of Care (OASOC) presented *Practical Intervention in an Integrated System*, a half-day conference focused on how to build an effective toolkit to address hoarding and related disorders. Over 230 clinical staff, providers and consumers attended the annual event held at the California Endowment.

Kevin Tsang, L.C.S.W., OASOC District Chief, welcomed the room of attendees. Sarah Gelberd, M.D., OASOC Medical Director, then introduced the keynote speaker, Danielle Schlichter, M.Ed., Psy.D.

"The purpose of the conference this year is to learn useful and practical tools that will help clients," Dr. Gelberd said.

The second morning session included a panel discussion entitled "Hearing from Our Community," where the audience could ask questions from those working with hoarders. Panelists included: Regina Lark, Mary De Van, Pam Inaba, Shannon Hamilton, Mischele Vieira and Christina Nairn.

Hoarding is the excessive collection and retention of things or animals until they interfere with day-to-day functions. The collection of newspapers, magazines, old

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clothes and other items may cause fires while animal hoarding can spread contagious diseases. Older adults represent a significant number of people who hoard.

Vignettes were provided that asked the audience what tools, strategies, reports, and/or other agencies would be useful with clients, featuring Dani Schlichter and Mary Devan, LCSW.

Lastly, Mary Devan and Christina Nairn did mock interviews with resistive and insightful clients, reviewing effective techniques.

Hoarding is both a mental health and public health problem that usually has been present for long periods of time; hasty interventions do not resolve it. Interventions without cooperation from the hoarder can have dangerous results. A careful and thorough assessment is needed for successful outcomes and interventions should include the older adult, family and other agencies such as LACDMH, APS, code enforcement, building and safety, animal control and criminal justice departments.

